

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat *Incorporated.*

DECEMBER 1990

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting	Dec. 7	Caring for Native Animals - Mrs B. Perry
Meeting	Feb. 1	Victorian Wildlife Atlas - Mr R. Humphries
Excursion	Dec. 9	Lakes Goldsmith and Burrumbeet
Excursion	Feb. 3	The coast in Anglesea area



Juvenile Eastern Rosella

President: Mr K Hammond Ph.053 394534
Vice Pres: Miss H Burgess 312210
Secretary: Mr J Gregurke 394993
Treasurer: Mrs F Williamson 327631
Editor: Mr L Fink 052 861319

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth., Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, cnr. STURT AND ARM-STRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY*

Early Botanists of Australia.

The Voluntary Guides of the Botanic Gardens Melbourne, made this their Bi-Centennial Project in 1988, we are privileged to hear this lecture and see their slides.

When Australia was founded Botany was on a high surge, timber was needed for shipbuilding, houses and furniture also straight tall trees were wanted for masts, Flower painting was an accomplishment and here was a land rich in new flora and ripe for the Botanist and his painter and drawer.

There were many unseen dangers, however, fever, Aborigines and even the risk of imprisonment. Two Woman Botanists died very early in their careers.

Canoes were of Bark and the Grass trees provided resins and many other things as well, Yam Daisies were plentiful and eaten by the natives so were Cycads but Europeans died when they ate the Cycad nuts, they needed to be leached, many other food natural in the bush was not known, many of the botanists ramblings must have been hungry affairs.

Probably the Dutch were the first to land on Australian soil in Western Australia. Then William Dampier, buccaneer, in the Roebuck his collection is still in Oxford University and *Clianthus dampieri* is still red, we know it as Sturt's Desert Pea. *Dampiera* is named after this first collector of Australian Flora. He landed first in 1688 in the Cygnet then in 1699 in the Roebuck, his remarks on the Kangaroo were "A sort of Raccoon with long jumping legs and short forelegs and very good meat".

James Cook was next in the Endeavour and on the 19th of April 1770 the East coast of Australia was sighted. With Cook were Joseph Banks, Dr Daniel Solander, a Swedish Naturalist working for the British Museum; Sydney Parkinson, a botanical Artist; Alexander Buchan, a painter of portraits and landscapes; Herman Sporing, a Swedish watch maker and draughtsman with training in surgery and acting as Banks Secretary and four servants.

Cook wrote in his report "The voyage has fully answered the expectations of my superiors, I have made no very great discoveries, yet I have explored more of the great South sea than all that have gone before meso much so there seems little remaining".

Much do we owe Sydney Parkinson for his stunning record of Australian Botany that flowed from his pen and brush, he was in demand from the most celebrated Botanists.

Joseph Banks name is perpetuated in the Banksias while Dr Daniel Solander gave his name to the Genus Solanum (America) Gamepeta jus herbs shrubs and trees of which potatoes is one and also Solanine the poison found in them.

The trip to Australia to these early botanists could be likened to a trip to another planet.

When the first fleet came to Australia there were 19 amature botanists with it.

Starting in 1792 other botanists to visit were David Burton and Colonel Patterson, in 1793 the Frenchman La Billardiere, and in order George Caley, Robert Brown said to be the father of Australian Botany, Ferdinand Bauer and Peter Good who found 500 species between them.

Then another Frenchman Leschenault De La Tour, Allan Cunningham, one of the most accomplished Botanists and explorers and was in 1872 the major exporter to Kew, he died of Tuberculosis at the age of 48, he was ten years in N.S.W.

After him came James Drummond who was a botanist in this country for 40 years, Baron Von Hugel and his sister the Countess of Hardenberg who assisted him, Georgiana Molloy who died early, Captain James Mangles, William Hooker, Ronald Gunn, James Backhouse and Ferdinand Von Mueller and I have no doubt that I have missed some, you will, how ever be able to associate many plants and trees with these men and women. Ronald Gunn also has a Bandicoot named after him.

The Speakers were thanked in the usual manner at the end of this magnificent presentation..

L.F.

LAANECOORIE CAMPOUT November 9-11, 1990

Saturday morning we investigated the forested areas near Tarnagulla and the Tarnagulla Flora Reserve. The forest included patches of Ironbark, Gum, Box and Mallee. The understorey was very dry and many plants were past their peak flowering time. Some interesting plants found included Mallee Wattle, Acacia montana and Showy Boronia, B.anemonifolia.

After lunch we visited the Waanyarra cemetery with graves dating from the 1850's. The area at the back of the cemetery contained a good variety of plants which have been protected from grazing.

Around the caravan park the Noisy Miners were dominant and nesting in the box trees. Musk Lorikeets flew quickly through the trees. At night we saw a Tawny Frogmouth, it had been seen with young chicks a few days earlier.

Paddling around the shallow, sheltered southern end of Laanecoorie reservoir provided a close look at many birds. Sacred Kingfishers, Magpie Larks and White-winged Choughs were seen in the River Red Gums. Red-rumped Parrots, Galahs and White-breasted Woodswallows flew out from hollows in dead trees. Dusky Moorhens were nesting on horizontal branches just above the water; one nest contained 9 fawn eggs with brown blotches. Several clutches of ducklings were seen - Black Duck, Grey Teal and Chestnut-breasted Shelduck. Masked Lapwings were common along the edge of the swamps. Less common birds seen were a pair of Pink-eared Ducks, Darter and Little Friar-bird. It was a joy to see a pair of Willy Wagtails feeding 3 large chicks in their neat cup-shaped nest. High up in a nearby tree a Dusky Woodswallow was sitting on a nest.

Enjoyable evenings were spent around the campfire. Supper was a feast of buck wheat pikelets, damper and chocolate bananas cooked in the coals. Greg accompanied campfire singing with his harmonica.

Butterflies

The many white butterflies seen in Ballarat recently were identified as Caper White Butterflies, *ANAPHAESIS java teutonia*.

The distribution of these butterflies is Moa Isl. Mainland Australia Lord Howe Isl. and Timor a few stragglers occasionally arrive in Tasmania some in New Guinea and the Trobriand Islands. It is one of our most common butterflies and there is up to eight subspecies in the Islands, New Britain, Calidonia Fiji and Samoa.

They have extremes of variations in mainland specimens, this is not seasonal as they all fly together, there is also a dark form.

Immense migratory flights of this species frequently occurs in Southern Queensland, N.S.W. and often extends into Victoria with a few reaching Tasmania and Bass Str. Islands, they breed no further south than Griffith in N.S.W.

The Larvae feed on various CAPPARIDACEAE including *C. mitchelli*, *C. spinosa*, *C. nobilis* and others it also feeds on *APOPHYLLUM anomalum* but this may depend on the availability of the Capparis plants, up to seventy eggs may be deposited on a single leaf, migrating females may lay vast numbers of eggs on Citrus (orange) and Zierra in the Murrumbidgee irrigation area. The Larvae which hatched died without eating or very shortly after sampling these plants.

N.B. Capparis Spinosa is the common cultivated caper of the Mediterranean region used for Sauces and garnishing.

L.F.

Notes for your diary.

Committee meeting 8pm. L. Fink's Meredith.

The notes on the Caper White Butterfly were taken from Butterflies of Australia, by I.F.B. Common and D.F. Waterhouse.

Merry Christmas



Botanical notes :- FAMILY POACEAE (GRAMINEAE)

" The Grass Family "

This is a very large family in the sense that there are so many species. There are more than 600 genera and 10,000 species and they are found almost everywhere.

There are at least 200 genera and 1,000 species in Australia.

The grass family contains species that provide food for man and grazing animals and in some countries bamboo stems and leaves and the leaves of other large grasses are used for buildings (at least for shelters!)

In the Ballarat area C. Beauglehole has found more than 40 genera and more than 96 species.

It is obvious that the naming (classification) of grasses is a very difficult task. In many cases the " flowers " are extremely small and the taxonomist must use a dissecting microscope, have great patience and be experienced !

As is usually the case the separation of the genera, tribes and species is based mainly on the arrangement of the floral parts.

The stems of grasses are hollow cylinders and the bases of the leaves are wrapped around the stems. The two parts of the leaf are known as the leaf-sheath and the leaf-blade. At the base of the blade there is a tongue-like membrane called a ligule.

The flowers (florets) are usually small and bisexual and are found in the axil of a concave bract (= lemma). Opposite to this and partially enclosed by it is an upper bract (= palea). Between these two are the ovary and stamens. The florets may be arranged on a small stem called the rachilla and at the base of this there are two outer glumes. The whole is known as a spikelet.

